



## Giving feedback

Feedback is commenting on another person's behavior or product for the purpose of indicating how you value that behavior or product. You can do this because you value that behavior or product and want the other person to know this. Or because you want the other person to exhibit that same behavior in the future or deliver a product of the same quality. With negative feedback, your intention is that someone improves something about their behavior or product.

### When

It is best to respond fairly quickly to specific situations that arise. Then it is clearest to both parties what the feedback is about. So feedback can be used very often, you don't have to wait for an official moment to do so.

For some situations, especially for feedback on something you would like to change, it can be good to sit down with the other person and make a special appointment for that.

You could also do this on a regular basis. The annual appraisal is an official moment when you give feedback on a number of topics that have come up in the past year.

### On what

You can give feedback on a number of things. These can include behavior, work/products, development and progress and prospects.

**Behavior** of your co-worker/manager. You can indicate what you like in the cooperation and what you think could be improved.

**Work/product** of someone, for example a draft paper for a scientific journal or a teaching plan.

**Development.** In a formal evaluation interview (e.g., annual review), it is important for supervisors to reflect on the development process someone is going through and to provide feedback on it. How does someone relate to the competencies outlined in the associated job profile? Do you see progression in their skills and output? Especially for PhD students, you may want to give feedback on the progress within the PhD trajectory. Where is someone now?

**Future in the organization.** In an official evaluation interview, as a leader you want to give feedback on how someone fits within the team and the organization and what the prospects are at the organization.



### Agenda of the conversation\*

1. Outline the structure of the conversation
2. Ask the other person to name some (3-5) good points
3. State some (3-5) good points yourself
4. Ask the other person to name some (2-3) points of improvement
5. Name some (2-3) areas for improvement yourself
6. Summarize the conversation and make concrete agreements together

### How

- Both positive and negative (in balance)
- Start with positive
- Be concrete , give feedback on behavior (what did you hear, what did you see) or specific parts of the product
- Give examples
- Indicate what effect the behavior has on you
- Give suggestions on how to do things differently. Example: I see you doing this, I think that... and I would like to....
- Give feedback only on behavior that can be changed
- Give another person space to respond

### Getting feedback

- Ask for clarification or examples
- Do not enter into discussion
- Do not give feedback back
- For one-sided feedback, explicitly ask for positive or negative feedback
- Thank for the feedback

\* Based on: PENDLETON, D., et al, 1984. The Consultation: An Approach to Learning and Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Patient Doctor consultation)